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LAW OF THE LINKS

RULES, PRINCIPLES AND
ETIQUETTE OF

GOLF

By HAY CHAPMAN



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LAW OF THE LINKS

**Rules, Principles and
Etiquette of Golf**

By HAY CHAPMAN

Editor of the
Pacific Golf and Motor and
Golf Editor of
the San Francisco Chronicle

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**Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C.**

November 16, 1922.

My dear Mr. Hay Chapman:

I shall be honored to have your golf brochure dedicated to me. I don't think it will improve my score, which is mounting with my age, but it may give me a little more standing with that respectable body of men known as golf enthusiasts.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

WM. H. TAFT.

Mr. R. H. Hay Chapman,
Editor, Pacific Golf & Motor,
127 Montgomery Street,
San Francisco, Cal.

TO WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

Chief Justice of the United States

IN dedicating this little book to your honored self I am reflecting the conviction of the world of golf that no citizen of the United States has lent greater distinction to the Royal and Ancient game than yourself. Many great lawyers play golf but, perhaps, few of them have studied its code. During the recent convention of the American Bar Association it was suggested in the columns of the San Francisco Chronicle that a commission be appointed by the barristers to simplify and unify the complex code under which the game is played in all quarters of the world. This, of course, was written in jest, but it would be a signal service to the United States Golf Association, possibly to its older and very venerable brother, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, if some such suggestion were followed. Too many laws—with some of them apparently contradictory—court transgression and invite dispute, if not eventually breeding contempt and anarchy. The following pages are merely the reflections of a layman with thirty years of golf behind him on both sides of the Atlantic, written in the belief that while the great army of golfers generally refuse to read The Rules of Golf in their rigid and brain-taxing form, some at least of them may incline themselves to a brief dissertation on the practice and application of these laws. These brief homilies were published originally in the San Francisco Chronicle, and it is in response to many requests that they be committed to more permanent form that the contents have been put between covers.

CHAPTER I.

The Virtue of the Fundamental Principle to Play the Ball as it Lies

CERTAIN notable incidents in competition recently have brought up golfers with a sharp turn as to the wisdom and importance of knowing the rules of golf and practicing them rigidly.

In the final of the Canadian amateur championship of 1922, there was an indecent demonstration against a referee because the gallery was ignorant of the rule which prevents a player from lifting "a loose impediment" more than a club's length from his ball. In this case it was a cigarette box—it might even have been a single cigarette—which Fraser thoughtlessly lifted before playing his ball, not on the putting green. The decision on this occasion caused a big commotion among the gallery, and the demonstration so "rattled" Fraser's opponent that, after being dormie, he lost the match and the championship.

Even in the United States national open

championship this same year, the bugbear of ignorance of the rules uplifted its ugly head. A well-known professional succumbed to the sheer ignorance of the marker who permitted him to drop out of a hazard in which there was water, without penalty.

There is no excuse for such ignorance among professionals or those who undertake the duties of marking or refereeing.

The only prescription against such contretemps or misdemeanor is knowledge of the rules; but it is notorious that the great majority of players—two or three million of them in the United States today—have never read the rules. Yet almost any manufacturer or dealer in sporting goods will furnish copies of the code for about 10 cents or gratis. Why don't golfers know the rules of golf?

We will all agree that any game worth playing at all is worth playing according to the rules. It is easy enough to degrade any game by wilfully ignoring the code. In the days of our grandfathers croquet fell into utter disrepute because the ladies would not "play fair," and cheating was thought innocent enough.

Stray to any corner lot of any large city in

the United States where you are fairly sure to find a gang of boys playing baseball. They know every rule of the game, and woe betide any youngster who attempts to "get away" with a breach of the well-known laws!

There is a noisy atmosphere about baseball, and a referee is not so sacrosanct a personality on the diamond as on the links. Noise is, or should be, a foreign substance to the links. The rulings of a referee are never countered on a golf course with gingerbeer bottles, although acrimonious criticisms may be heard around the nineteenth hole. Coincidence of a player's foot at a base and another player's handling of the ball makes many people see things differently on the diamond; there is no such race between hand, ball and foot on the links; hence there is not the same opportunity for difference of opinion.

But rules of golf are much more complex than those of any other game we know of except perhaps Mah Jong. The game itself is intricate, although the primary conditions are of the simplest, its object being to get the ball into eighteen holes with the fewest number of strokes possible and its fundamental principle being to **play the ball as it lies**. It is in the

transgression of this cardinal law—the governing spirit of the game—that perhaps nine-tenths of the ordinary violations of the rules are committed. And any young golfer cannot start better than preserving this principle as a perpetual memorandum. The golfer who systematically and habitually plays the ball as it lies will make few mistakes in principle, either through the green or on the putting green. In fine, this means that he will never do anything to improve his lie, except availing himself of the single permission to lift a “loose impediment” within a club’s length of his ball; of dropping it according to specifications should it be on “ground under repair;” that if his ball should move in addressing it (except on the tee) he will at once inform his competitor and take the penalty of a stroke, and that he will inform himself of the specific rules, U. S. G. A. and local, according to the course on which he is playing, as to the playing of a ball within a club’s length of upkeep obstacles or lying on other debateable ground.

Despite their complexity, the rules of golf are inspired by equity and are usually a matter of common sense combined with the spirit of good sportsmanship. All too often one hears

a player ask if he may do this or that, when he himself is perfectly conscious that such an action cannot be within the terms of the rules because it would be contrary to the spirit of the game and against common or garden fairness.

CHAPTER II.

The Penalties for a Lost Ball and Essential Etiquette

Having, then, the fixed principle firmly implanted in our minds that the fundamental virtue of the game of golf is to play the ball as it lies, let us consider the exceptions to this rule. The exceptions provided for are only for circumstances which prevent the possibility of playing the ball as it lies. The first exception obviously is a lost ball, and the rule permits a player to return to the spot from which he struck the ball which is lost and play another ball, losing what is usually known as "stroke and distance." In the event of the ball having been lost from a tee shot, he is permitted to tee another ball, and is then playing his third shot. In some clubs the penalty has been reduced to distance only, but it is most important to inform yourself of the local rule in this regard before entering a tournament. Any such local rule should be plainly printed on the back of the score card.

Let us pause at this instance to consider the selfish, discourteous and altogether abominable practice so very prevalent in regard to the rights of players when a ball is lost in their match. This breach of the etiquette of golf occurs not only in tournaments, but every day on most courses in the progress of four-ball matches, the daily habit of the majority of modern golfers.

When a ball is lost—and it does not take more than a few seconds to be convinced of such a situation—it is the duty of the players to signal promptly to the match behind them to “come through.” This part of the ceremony is usually observed, but, sad to relate, in nine cases out of ten the lost ball hunters often find the errant pill just as the match behind them is on their heels and ruthlessly proceed with their own match to the delay and discomfiture of the match behind them, which has the prior rights.

Let there be no mistake in this matter. The Etiquette of Golf, quite as important as the rules themselves, ordains:

Players when looking for a lost ball should allow other matches coming up to pass them; they should signal to the

players following them to pass, and having given such a signal **they should not continue their play until these players have passed and are out of reach.**

And in this connection of four-ball matches, another unwritten regulation is that in the case of slow four-ballers such as those who are playing best ball and aggregate, syndicate and other combinations which necessitate the holing out of each player's putts, it is the duty of laggards who are not keeping their place on the green to allow speedier players to pass them whenever the aforesaid laggards have a clear hole in front of them which is not occupied.

Before leaving the subject of lost ball, definition number 20 says "A ball is lost if it be not found within five minutes after the search for it has been begun."

A ball which disappears in a water hazard or even in casual water is not treated as a lost ball. The penalty for dropping a ball behind a water hazard is one stroke; there is no penalty for dropping a second ball for a lost ball in casual water on the fairway, a condition, however, which rarely occurs.

In making the penalty "stroke and distance" for lost ball, out of bounds and unplayable lie,

the combined authorities of the R. and A. and the U. S. G. A. were anxious to make the penalty uniform for the three cases. But there was such an uproar concerning the excessive penalty for a ball out of bounds that the U. S. G. A. added a rider to the rule that "the penalty stroke may be remitted by the local rule." The U. S. G. A. has now added this rider to the lost ball rule, and in many of the clubs of California the penalty in both cases is now only the loss of distance.

The penalty for "unplayable lie" still stands as to both stroke and distance, which is an equitable rule, because in the opinion of many golfers there is no such thing as an unplayable lie, and the excessive penalty also is enforced to prevent players taking advantage of preference to play another shot rather than face a situation which may cost them still more strokes. Thus a player drives into the woods and is fearful lest he cannot get out of the difficulty with a single stroke. It is obviously within the discretion of the player himself to determine if a lie is unplayable, and if he chooses so to regard it the double penalty should be enforced.

CHAPTER III.

When the Ball Cannot Be Played as it Lies

The next consideration of cases in which the ball is not played as it lies is the out-of-bounds rule. On the links of our ancestors there was practically no out-of-bounds rule, for on the large expanse of seaside dunes there were no restricting boundaries other than the sea. But on the modern inland course, which used to be considered and named thus in contrast to the seaside links, neighboring private property and public roads necessitated the establishment of "bounds."

The "out-of-bounds" cry from a fore caddie is one of the most distressing sounds in a golfer's ear. Only the other day it cost John Black the national open championship, and at the last hole but one of the long grind of seventy-two holes. But even at Skokie, in the most important event staged by the United States Golf Association, the double penalty of "stroke and distance," as ordained by the joint wisdom of the U. S. G. A. and the Royal

and Ancient of St. Andrews, was modified to "distance only," and, as far as this country is concerned, public opinion is so strong that the single penalty is today almost universal, and on many courses a similar local rule is adopted to make the penalty for a lost ball the same.

There should be as little out-of-bounds as possible, and recently the golf commissioners of the Olympic Club at Lakeside, where the club now owns its own property, the contraband land has properly been reduced to a minimum.

When a player drives a ball out of bounds from the tee he is permitted to tee his ball, but in all other cases "a ball shall be dropped" and "as nearly as possible at the spot from which the previous ball was played."

The second section of rule 22 ordains that in order to save delay a player when he thinks he has hit a ball out of bounds, may at once play an alternate ball, but if the first ball is discovered to be within bounds he shall play it without penalty. The player is not entitled to presume that his ball is out of bounds till he has found it, after a search of five minutes.

A further important note concerning the out-of-bounds rule is that a player may stand out

of bounds to play a ball lying within bounds.

When else, besides the lost ball and the ball out-of-bounds, is the ball not played as it lies?

If your ball is in such a position that it is unplayable—a condition which in the opinion of many good players never obtains—both in match and medal play the ball may be lifted and, returning to the spot from which the stroke was played, you lose “stroke and distance.” If the “unplayable ball” was hit from the tee you are permitted to tee it and you are playing three; if through the green the ball must be dropped and you are playing “two more.”

There are a number of advocates in favor of making the penalty for the unplayable ball loss of distance only. They maintain, and with some reason, that the double penalty is excessive in that it practically puts a player out of a hole in match play, and is too severe in medal play or stroke competition.

But the old rule which permitted a player to tee a ball which he regarded as unplayable, with the penalty of two strokes, enforced practically the same punishment.

Many cases of “unplayable balls” are properly covered by local rules or by Rule 11, which permits “a ball lying in or touching any flag

stick, guide flag, movable guide post, wheelbarrow, tool, roller, grasscutter, box, vehicle or similar obstacle," (when these obstructions cannot be moved) "or lying on or touching clothes, or tents, or ground under repair or covered up or opened for the purpose of the upkeep of the course, or lying in one of the holes, or in a guide flag hole, or in a hole made by the greenkeeper, to be lifted and dropped without penalty as near as possible to the place where it lay, but no nearer the hole." This sanction also obtains to a ball lying within a club's length of a pile or mound, water pipe, or hydrant, and "as near as possible" is defined "within a club's length." A pile or mound of cut grass or any other material piled up for removal is considered "upkeep" and a ball lodging in or lying on such an obstruction may be lifted and dropped without penalty.

Other exceptions to the cardinal rule of playing the ball as it lies are found in reference to water hazards and casual water. Rule 27 orders that if a ball lie or be lost in a recognized water hazard (whether the ball lie in water or not), or in casual water in a hazard, the player may drop a ball under penalty of one stroke, either behind the hazard or in the hazard. If

a ball lie in casual water through the green, the player may drop a ball within two club lengths of the margin and if a ball lie in casual water on the green or if casual water intervene between a ball lying on the putting green and the hole, the ball may be lifted without penalty and placed by hand either within two club lengths directly behind the spot from which the ball was lifted, or in the nearest position to that spot which is not nearer the hole and which affords a putt to the hole without casual water intervening.

One more exception, and this on the putting green, is that when balls lie within six inches of each other (the distance to be measured from the nearest points) the ball lying nearer to the hole may be lifted, which leads us to the consideration of the stymie in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

What the Stymie Means—Balls on the Putting Green in Match Play

The stymie has been the *casus belli* between two schools of golf in America for more than ten years; but in 1922, after several experiments for its elimination, it was restored to its time-honored status. The Western Golf Association, composed of most of the leading clubs in the Middle West and numerous clubs in the far West, led the campaign against the stymie as the result of a very general protest against its imagined unfairness. The survival of the stymie through centuries of golf is only another evidence of the cardinal principle of the game to play the ball as it lies, equally applicable to circumstances on the putting green as through the green. The opponents of the stymie have always argued that the situation is a result of luck and often precipitates unfair and unfortunate conditions. But the counter argument plainly is that there always must be a certain element of luck in any game;

that the stymie adds interest to golf and, most important of all, that the element of luck can be overcome by skill.

There have been some advocates for reducing golf to mathematical precision as a test of pure skill, attempting to eliminate every element of luck; but the plan is obviously impossible, and it is gravely open to doubt if the game would be as attractive as in its natural state, where "breaks" will always obtain. One of the great charms of golf is its splendid uncertainty, in which the wind and weather play tremendous parts. Moreover, hardly any two "lies" are alike.

Conceding putts, which was the device attempted as a solution of the stymie, did not prove satisfactory. It violated a cardinal principle of the game and was never convincing in that we have all seen even the best of players miss "sitters" when they had to be holed at a pinch.

Hence, after several years of experiment the stymie has been restored both by the U. S. G. A. and the Western, and is now again of world-wide prevalence. The definition of a stymie is as follows:

A player is laid a stymie if on the putting green

the opponent's ball lies in the line of his putt to the hole, provided the balls be not within six inches of each other (the distance to be measured from the nearest points).

This is the sole exception to the rule that stymies must be played. The player who concedes a putt, when his ball is further from the hole than his opponent, automatically loses the hole. If a player hits his opponent's ball, the opponent has the option of leaving his ball where it is or replacing it. If a player knocks his opponent's ball into the hole in the act of playing his own ball, his opponent is considered to have holed out on his last putt.

It is not lawful to pick up your ball to clean it unless there is a special local rule providing such special permission. It is hard luck to have to putt a ball with a slice of mud adhering to it, especially if that mud has been gathered by a fine backspin approach, but it must be done. Even if you have to lift your ball for causal water or in case of your ball being within six inches of your opponent's ball, you are not permitted to clean it.

Cleaning a ball when in play entails a penalty of disqualification in medal play, and the loss of the hole in match play, except under special rulings of local committees in charge.

The rules for medal play in reference to putting are, of course, different. When both balls are on the putting green, if a competitor's ball strike the ball of the player with whom he is competing, the competitor shall incur a penalty of one stroke, and the ball which was struck shall at once be replaced. Hence in medal play you may always have your opponent's ball lifted. But we will defer the discussion of similar provisions until we deal with the special rules for play in stroke competitions.

Is there, then, any other case in which a ball may be lifted in match play?

A ball in play may, with the opponent's consent, be lifted for the purpose of identification.

When the balls lie within a club's length of each other through the green, or in a hazard, the ball lying nearer the hole may, at the option of either the player or the opponent, be lifted until the other ball is played.

If a ball split into separate pieces another ball may be dropped where any piece lies. If a ball crack or become unfit for play the player may change it on intimating to his opponent his intention to do so. Mud adhering to a ball

shall not be considered as making it unfit for play.

We have now considered all the cases in match play when a ball may be lifted, and the important thing for the beginner to remember is that these are only exceptions to the general governing rule:

A ball must be played wherever it lies or the hole be given up.

In the exceptions it is important to remember there is a strictly prescribed method of dropping a ball which is constantly violated by many players:

The player himself shall drop it. He shall face the hole, stand erect and drop the ball behind him over his shoulder. The penalty for breach of this rule is the loss of the hole. He can only drop it once, unless it rolls into a hazard, in which case he may re-drop without penalty. If in the act of dropping the ball, it touch the player, he incurs no penalty, but must still play the ball as it lies.

CHAPTER V.

**Etiquette on the Tee—Heavy Responsibilities
on Your Caddie's Shoulders**

Starting again from the first tee, before driving off, it is well to consider certain points of etiquette thereon. Punctuality is the first consideration, and this is a point on which too many golfers are impolitely lax. In the older centers of golf unpunctuality at tournaments is not condoned. You are given a certain time for starting your medal round or your match, and if you are not ready when your name is called, your name is expunged and you are disqualified or defaulted then and there. In nine cases out of ten there can be no excuse for keeping on the anxious seat the man with whom you are paired for a medal round or your opponent in a match. In the latter instance, unless a message has been sent pleading delay and special sanction, it is unreasonable to expect your opponent to wait indefinitely and not claim a default. In most cases a golfer dislikes to win by default, and the onus of such "walk-

overs" should be undertaken by the official starter or the directors of a tournament.

In the event of a competitor discovering that he cannot compete in the match play, he should notify the officials when he turns in his medal score to prevent his name being drawn and possibly keeping some other player out of a flight. In no case is a player permitted to receive a prize for a gross or net score in a qualifying round if he does not intend to compete in the match play. (Etiquette of golf, clause 10.)

When your fellow competitor or opponent is on the tee, do not stand behind him, but by the tee-box, ready to make your own tee as soon as he has driven. Remember the first clause in the Etiquette of Golf, "No one should stand close to, or directly behind the ball, move or talk when a player is making a stroke."

It is important before a stroke competition or a match to inform yourself thoroughly of any local rules which should be printed plainly on the back of the score card or posted in a conspicuous place.

Remember that you are not permitted to ask advice from anyone but your own caddie. The penalty is the loss of the hole in the match play

and disqualification in medal play. Remember also that your caddie is part and parcel of yourself and that any fault of his or transgression of the rules on his part is equivalent to your committing it yourself.

The penalties involved by the actions of a careless or ignorant caddie are very severe, and presumably the code was so drafted when the average caddie in Scotland was an experienced and sometimes too canny adult, instead of the half-baked lads whom too often nowadays we are forced to endure. For instance, if your caddie moves either your own ball or your opponent's—inadvertently, it may be—you are punished with the loss of the hole. In the medal play if your caddie does anything to improve your lie—or, for that matter, your stance by holding back brush or the limbs of a tree—you are penalized two strokes. If your ball hits your caddie you lose the hole and the penalty in medal play is one stroke.

In teeing your ball, be careful that it is within the discs and not more than two club lengths behind them. In medal play, if a competitor drives from outside the limits of the teeing ground, he shall count a stroke and play his second from within these limits. In match

play the shot may be at once recalled without penalty.

When playing through the green, or from a hazard, a player may have the line to the hole indicated to him by his caddie, but he must place no mark nor stand on the line in order to indicate it while the stroke is being made. The penalty for a breach of this rule is the loss of the hole in match play and two strokes in medal play.

Similarly, on the green, your caddie may point out the line of putt to you, but in doing this he must not touch the ground on the proposed line of putt. The penalty is again the loss of a hole or the equivalent of two strokes in medal play.

Hence it is obvious that the responsibility attached to the caddie is onerous, apart from his helpful or distressful demeanor. A good caddie wins many a match for his principal. An indifferent or bad caddie is a serious handicap. But if you don't know the rules yourself, how in St. Andrews can you expect your caddie to know them?

CHAPTER VI

**“Through the Green”—The Crime of
Improving Your Lie**

Having now left the first tee, keep once more, and always, in mind the cardinal principle to “play the ball as it lies,” and thus you will avoid nine out of ten of the usual transgressions of the rules. Walter Hagen, the first native American to win the British open championship, was confronted at Sandwich with a very bad lie from a very good tee shot. “Hello,” remarked a sympathetic friend in the gallery, “that’s a rotten lie and tough luck!”

“Yes,” responded Hagen, with that characteristic smile of his, “but that’s where it lies!” There’s the true golfer for you.

The temptation to improve one’s lie by pressing the ground with the club immediately behind the ball is often present, but if indulged in it should cost you the hole in match play and two strokes in medal play. Rule 10 says: “In playing through the green irregularities of surface, which could in any way affect the player’s

stroke, shall not be removed nor pressed down by the player or his caddie.”

The most frequent violation of this rule and cardinal principle is seen in the rough, where too many players have the mistaken idea that they are entitled to a sight of their ball. This positively is not so. If a ball is hidden from view, it must be played as such, the only provision made being that a player may remove a “loose impediment” within a club’s length of his ball. Hence a dead stick or stone may be lifted within the prescribed limits. But nothing “living” may be touched. Every golfer should memorize rule 15, which reads:

Before striking a ball in play, a player shall not move, bend nor break anything fixed or growing, except so far as necessary to enable him fairly to take his stance in addressing the ball, or in making his backward or forward swing. The club may only be grounded lightly and not pressed on the ground.

A note to this rule explains that “drawing the club back and forward across the line of play is illegal and entails a penalty of loss of hole in match play and penalty of two strokes in medal play or stroke competition.” Undue pressure in grounding a club entails a similar penalty.

In reference to the popular delusion that a

player is entitled to a "sight of his ball," rule 10 is emphasized by rule 21, which ordains that "if a ball lie in fog, bent bushes, long grass or the like" (in the rough), "only so much thereof shall be touched as will enable the player to find his ball." There is the double penalty for breach of this rule, loss of hole in match play and two strokes in medal.

The only exception to this rule is when a ball is completely covered with sand, only so much of the sand may be removed as to enable the player to see the top of his ball.

There is very general misconception about practice swings, and many, even topnotch players, may be seen constantly violating the rule that "a player may take a practice swing or swings more than a club's length from the ball." (U. S. G. A.) Some players also have the mistaken idea that it is a violation of this rule to take a practice swing in the direction of the hole, but this is not so proscribed.

In any match or stroke competition a player should be careful to see who is "away" before playing a stroke. "The ball farther from the hole shall be played first." At any time when a player violates this rule, which only entails common courtesy, his opponent may at once re-

call the stroke. Frequent violations of this courtesy are to be seen, the result largely of the prevalent four-ball match in which, as a rule, the players are too exclusively interested in the fate of their own balls to be concerned about that of the other fellow. The real courtesy of the game of golf is that no player or his caddie should be in front of the ball in play—that is the ball furthest from the hole. It is certainly disconcerting, to say the least, to be addressing your ball with a player nonchalantly advancing either on the right or left of you and sometimes, indeed, almost in front of you. And in this matter, caddies should be schooled as well as players.

If there is doubt between players as to which of the two is “away,” either through the green or on the putting green, the question often involving a critical situation, in the absence of a referee, is best settled by tossing a coin.

Accidents in golf are, of course, quite frequent, and one of the most common and distressing of them is when a player in addressing his ball moves it. He must at once draw the attention of his opponent or playing companion in medal competition to the fact and charge himself with the penalty of one stroke. “A

ball is deemed to have moved if it leave its original position in the least degree; but it is not considered to 'move' if it merely oscillates and comes to rest in its original position."

One more reflection before we come to the rules about hazards, and that is the definition of a "stroke." It is the "forward movement of the club made with the intention of striking the ball, or any contact between the head of the club and the ball resulting in movement of the ball, except in the case of a ball accidentally knocked off a tee."

To avoid the breach of the rule against moving your ball, be careful about addressing your ball, either through the green or on the putting green. It is a dangerous practice to address your ball too close or to pass your club over the ball too often. Many players while settling for a putt, address the ball both fore and aft. And in passing the club over the ball there is often imminent danger of touching it and moving it, with the consequent penalty of a stroke.

CHAPTER VII

**“Loose Impediments”—Definition of a
Hazard**

Playing through the green, there are certain rules to be observed both in connection with the fairway and hazards. We have already discussed the exceptions to the given rules of playing the ball as it lies, and the matter now in front of us, is that of “loose impediments.” There should be no such thing on the fairway, but too often its fair surface is littered with cigarettes or match boxes dropped by careless or ill-mannered players, and occasionally, of course, there is a stick, twig, or stone that has found its way on to the green sward. The loose impediment must be within a club’s length of your ball for you to have the right to lift or move it. If you move an impediment which is more than a club’s length from the ball, you lose the hole in match play or two strokes in medal play. The term “loose impediments” denotes, “any obstruction not fixed or growing

and includes dung, wormcasts, mole, hills, snow and ice."

Nothing may be touched or moved in a hazard, which is defined as "any bunker, water (except casual water), sand, path, road, ditch, bush or rushes."

The term "bunker" is generally understood to mean a sand or gravel pit, artificial or natural. In the case of the hazards of road or path, they must be regarded as such, unless, as at some clubs, there is a local rule concerning them. The rule concerning hazards exempts from "sand" such sand as is blown on the fairway or placed there for upkeep, much as casual water is exempted from water hazards.

When a ball lies in a hazard "the club shall not touch the ground, nor shall anything be touched or moved before the player strikes at the ball."

The exceptions to this otherwise adamant rule are that the player may place his feet firmly on the ground for the purpose of taking his stance, and in addressing the ball, or in his backward or forward swing, any grass, bent, bush or other growing substance, or the side of a bunker, paling, or other immovable obstacle. Violation of this rule cost a player the Ohio

championship in 1922, when on the home hole he was trapped in a bunker and his club touched the sand on his back swing. It is very important to remember this rule, for a great many players seem to think they are at liberty to touch the sand on their back swing. Obviously, of course, they touch the sand before the ball on their down swing when they are playing an "explosive shot."

There is a further exemption in regard to touching anything in a bunker or hazard in the case of steps or planks placed in a hazard for access or egress, and these may be moved without penalty.

The rule about "unplayable ball" already has been discussed, the penalty being stroke and distance, but the old rule still obtains in medal play only, that a ball may be lifted from any place (rule 11) on the course, and may be teed and played with the penalty of two strokes. This, however, is a situation which very rarely occurs, for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the player will prefer to take the usual penalty of stroke and distance.

If the ball lie or be lost in a water hazard (whether the ball lie in water or not) or in

casual water in a hazard, the player may drop a ball under penalty of one stroke, either (a) behind the hazard, keeping the spot, at which the ball entered the margin of the hazard between himself and the hole, or (b) in the hazard under the same provision. Of course, a player taking the penalty will usually prefer to drop it outside the hazard, but not more than two club lengths from the hazard.

CHAPTER VIII

**Courtesies of the Game and Opponent's
Misfortunes**

We have now exhausted the rules as far as they pertain "through the green," that is on the fairway, in "the rough," lost ball, out of bounds, unplayable lie and hazards. But before approaching the putting green, there is a question of etiquette concerning looking for a lost ball, about which many golfers and spectators frequently display their ignorance. No one in a gallery—no one "outside the match"—has any right to assist a player looking for a lost ball until and unless his opponent intervenes and sanctions such "interference." When an exciting match is being followed by a gallery, frequently some ill-informed person imagines he is performing signal service by discovering the lost ball. Under the strictest interpretation of the code, such interference may cost the player the loss of the hole.

Five minutes is the maximum of time permitted to search before a ball is decisively

"lost." I once knew an opponent who stood by with a watch in hand while the player and his caddie were looking for the ball, but this is a brutal exception to the courtesies of the game which demand that a golfer is as concerned as much for his opponent as for himself and invariably assists in the search for a ball. If there is any prolonged delay, the opponent does the graceful thing by promptly signaling to spectators asking them to assist in the search.

No true golfer wishes to profit by his opponent's misfortune, and he will always prefer that the ball be found. Some cynical players are of the frame of mind which induced Andrew Lang to define "a good shot" as "one that lands your opponent in a bunker," and we have occasionally heard a jocular and too eager player exclaim over his partner's punishment, "Hard luck—thank Heaven!"

The true spirit of golf, however, is that of the sportsman and the gentleman who does not want to profit by his opponent's bad luck or even by his bad play, but desires to win a match by his better golf alone.

Two other considerations may be reviewed before we come to the putting green, the first of which is what happens when you play the

wrong ball. There is seldom any excuse for playing with your opponent's ball or with a ball outside the match. The rules provide that you may always, after obtaining your opponent's consent, lift the ball for identification, carefully replacing it where it lay.

But in the event of your discovering that you have played with the wrong ball you lose the hole (Rule 23) unless the opponent then plays the player's ball, in which case the penalty is canceled, and unless the mistake occur through the information given by an opponent or his caddie. If the mistake be discovered before the opponent has played, it shall be rectified by dropping a ball as near as possible to the place where the opponent's ball lay.

In stroke competition or medal play, if a player play a stroke with a ball other than his own, he shall incur no penalty provided that he then plays his own ball, but if he plays two consecutive strokes with a wrong ball he shall be disqualified.

On the putting green if a player plays with a wrong ball the ball shall be replaced.

In a hazard, if a competitor play more than one stroke with a ball other than his own and the mistake be discovered before he has played

a stroke with the wrong ball from outside the limits of the hazard, he shall incur no penalty provided he then plays with his own ball.

In the Pacific Northwest amateur championship in 1920 at Vancouver that very fine golfer and sportsman, H. Chandler Egan, about the thirtieth hole of the final with Wilhelm, hooked a shot into the woods, apparently found his ball, played out and won the hole. As he picked his ball out of the cup he exclaimed: "Your hole, Rudy! This is not my ball." This action caused many plaudits for Egan from the gallery, but no true golfer and honest player could have done otherwise.

If a player play a stroke with the ball of any one not engaged in the match and the mistake be discovered and intimated to his opponent before his opponent has played his next stroke, there shall be no penalty; but if the mistake is not discovered and so intimated until after the opponent has played his next stroke, the player's side shall lose the hole (Rule 20).

CHAPTER IX.

On the Putting Green Both in Match and Medal Play

We are now approaching the putting green, and it is well to be punctilious concerning whose turn it is to play—"Who's away?" This is often the crisis of a hole and of many a match. Do not play your shot until you are satisfied it is your right, because under the rules your opponent in match play may recall your shot if you have played out of turn.

As you come toward the green—in fairly sociable proximity, it may be hoped, to your opponent—it is well to intimate the score lest there be any mistake on your part or on his. The terms in match play are different from those in medal play, in which you simply recount the number of strokes played. In a match you say, "Like as we lie," if you have both played the same number of strokes; or "I'm playing the odd," if you are, like as you lie before the stroke, or "I'm playing the like," if your opponent has already played one more

stroke than yourself. If your opponent lies three and you are playing five you say, "I'm playing two more," or, if vice versa, you say, "I'm playing one off two." These terms are time honored and should be assimilated by every golfer. This method is much more polite and also self-assuaging if your opponent has already played six strokes and you are playing seven. Playing against the pencil in stroke competition is sufficient torture for truth telling and humiliation in horrid numerals.

In stroke competition or in medal play you must realize that it is your positive, if painful, duty to watch and record every stroke that your playing companion makes. It is also your duty to "call" him for any infraction of the rules. There is, or should be, nothing personal in either of these duties, for you and he are simply competitors against many others and you represent their interests as well as your own. Unhappily, it is not enough to remind some pot-hunters that "God is watching 'em" in the rough. You must keep your own weather eye open. To avoid any trouble or error it is well in medal play to call the score after every hole is played as you record it on the card. You should keep only your playing companion's

score—you are his “marker”—but there is no reason why you cannot keep your own on the margin of the card as a tally.

Coming then, at last, to the green, what rules are there about which you may have any doubt? Contrary to the rule which through the green prevents you from moving or lifting any “loose impediment” which is more than a club length from your ball, you may pick up and remove any loose impediment on the green, and the green is defined as twenty yards from the hole.

But you must not use your club to brush aside anything along the line of your putt unless it be “dung, worm casts, snow and ice,” which may be scraped aside with the club but “the club must not be laid with more than its own weight upon the ground, nor must anything be pressed down either with the club or in any other way.” The reason for these tense restrictions is obvious; for the third clause of the rule (28) ordains “The line of the putt must not be touched, except by placing the club immediately in front of the ball in the act of addressing it, and as above authorized.”

One can hardly be too meticulous in the observation of the rules on the putting green,

for infringement is very costly. You probably have seen even experienced golfers tapping the line of the putt with their clubs. The penalty is loss of the hole in match play and two strokes in medal play. Remember that any "loose impediment" other than those authorized must be lifted and scraped aside. This injunction refers to loose leaves or twigs, cigarette stubs, matches or any other "loose impediment." But the hand may be used to lift any of them. Only be scrupulously sure that it is a loose impediment and not a growing one, even if an apparently dead blade of grass or weed. The man, even though it be Jim Barnes, who picks a four-leaf clover on the green while the ball is in play, may lose a match or championship for doing so.

In moving loose impediments be very careful that you do not affect the lie of your ball. If the player's ball moves after any loose impediment lying within six inches of it has been touched by the player or his caddie, the player shall be deemed to have caused it to move and the penalty shall be one stroke.

It is not permissible to touch the ground behind the hole in order to point out the line of

putt. The player's caddie or his partner's caddie may, before the stroke is played, point out the direction for putting, but in doing this they shall not touch the ground on the proposed line of putt. No mark shall be placed anywhere on the putting green. Nor is any player or caddie engaged in the match allowed by moving or otherwise to influence the action of the wind upon the ball.

A player is always entitled to send his own caddie to stand at the hole while he plays his stroke. But either player is entitled to have the flagstick removed while approaching the hole (Rule 22). If, however, a player's ball strike the flagstick which has been so removed by himself or his partner, or his caddie, he shall lose the hole.

In medal play, when a ball lying within twenty yards of the hole is played and strikes, or is stopped by the flagstick or the person standing at the hole, the penalty is two strokes.

CHAPTER X

**Severe But Proper Penalties For Not Strictly
Observing the Code**

Thus there is nothing in the rules governing match play, which prevents your putting at any distance with the flag-stick still in the hole as long as your opponent does not demand that it be removed. But in medal play there is penalty of two strokes if you hit the flag when you have putted from within twenty yards' distance therefrom—the technical area of the putting green.

Also there is in medal play a severe penalty of one stroke for hitting the other fellow's ball when both balls are on the putting green. Therefore it behooves you to be very careful to have your playing companion's ball lifted if there is any danger of your hitting it. This is particularly true when his ball lies beyond the hole. I have seen a player in a stroke competition make a very fine putt slightly over-running the hole and hitting the other ball,

and have been sorry for his chagrin when he faced the penalty of one stroke.

The rule most often broken by young players in stroke competition, is neglecting to hole out every putt. Because his ball lies within two or three inches of the hole, a novice forgets that it is necessary and imperative to hole it out with a proper stroke and not draw it in or "slop" at it.

A leading young player of the Olympic Club was very indignant with me when in a qualifying round he missed a short putt and promptly picked up his ball. He would have been disqualified—out of the tournament entirely—if I had not insisted that he replace his ball properly and putt it out with a penalty of two strokes. That is to say, he had missed the short putt for a five, and the hole eventually cost him eight. This error was doubtless due to the prevalence of the four-ball match in which altogether too many putts are conceded and one falls into loose and dangerous habits.

It is, too, this frequent conceding of putts that causes so many players to form a totally erroneous and overflattering estimate of their "medal" scores over their home courses.

"I got an 81 this morning," says McSandy,

blithely, but having been a member of that four-ball match, you recall the fact that he took some three or four putts of more than three feet by the "gimme" route, and was fairly liberal to himself on at least one hole when he was entirely "out of the hole."

If a ball rests against the flag-stick which is in the hole, the player or his caddie is entitled to remove the flag-stick, and, if the ball falls into the hole, the player shall be deemed to have holed out on the last stroke.

Similarly, in match play, if a player's ball knocks his opponent's ball into the hole, the opponent is considered to have holed out at his last stroke.

If your ball hits your opponent's ball (in match play), he is entitled, if he choose, to replace it, but this must be done before either player has played another stroke.

There is often confusion and acrid argument concerning the fate of a ball (still in match play) which lies on the lip of the cup—how long may a player leave it there waiting for a favoring breeze? Rule 32, section 3, ordains that if you have putted out and your opponent then plays his ball to the lip of the cup you are not allowed to knock it away, but he must

play his next stroke at once if you ask him to do so. On the other hand, if your opponent's ball already lies on the lip of the cup before you putt and you hole out, you may then knock his ball away if you wish, conceding that he has putted out with the next stroke, unless your ball has struck his and set it in motion, so that there is a chance of its falling in. This rule requires very careful reading and digestion.

Come we then to the stymie, which now has been restored apparently for good and all. There is no more conceding of putts in match play as long as both balls are on the green and your ball is further from the hole than your opponent's. The definition of a stymie is:

A player is laid a stymie if on the putting green the opponent's ball lies in the line of his putt to the hole, provided the balls be not within six inches of each other.

When they lie within six inches—the distance being measured from their nearest points—the ball lying nearer to the hole may, at the option of the player or the opponent, be lifted until the other ball is played, and the lifted ball shall then be replaced as near as possible to the place where it lay. If either ball is

accidentally moved in this process it must be replaced.

The difference between match and medal play, necessitating two different sets of rules, or rather a special set of rules for medal play or stroke competition is, match play is competition by hole and medal play competition by stroke.

There is one more set of rules to be considered in the next and final article—the rules for three-ball, best ball and four-ball matches.

CHAPTER XI

**Abuses of the Four-Ball Match—Time-Honored
Courtesies of the Course**

Americans have made the four-ball match the most popular form of play upon the links, and today it is so prevalent that except in tournaments "singles" or "twosomes," as they are sometimes called, are rarely in evidence. The old-fashioned foursome, in which a pair of players played the same ball at alternate stroke, has fallen into disuse and is rarely seen, except in the "mixed" variety, in which a man and a woman are partners.

The prevailing popularity of the four-ball match is due to its alleged advantages of sociability and to the variety of "side" matches and wagers which it admits. Until some fifteen years ago, the usual day's golf at our country clubs consisted of strenuous singles in the morning and less energetic foursomes after lunch. But the American player at the week-end wants to get all the actual play he can possibly crowd

in and prefers to play his own ball all the time as well as being in a partnership.

There are several abuses of the four-ball match, which distresses the old-timer. The first is that too many four-ball addicts play too much to the score card and have forgotten the intrinsic virtue of golf to play the game hole by hole without bothering about the pestiferous pencil. Then again, some of the old-time courtesies and charms of the game have been abandoned.

The time-honored courtesy of the links was to have as much consideration for your opponent or partner as for yourself and never to play your own ball until you were satisfied of the other fellow's position; moreover, never to be in advance, either player or caddie, of the ball in play. The modern tendency is to be callous of the other fellow, to rush after your own ball and often to be ahead of one of the players. Unless a golfer has become case hardened, he cannot do a stroke justice if caddies are in front of him and other members of the four-ball match are advancing on either side of him. Golf is not a foot race, and it is not comely to see players in a four-baller "hit and run."

Moreover, the four-ball match has introduced to the links such complications as "best ball and aggregate" affairs in which each player must hole out every putt, thus necessarily delaying the players behind their match and congesting the course. "Side" issues should **also be tabu** in a real four-ball match. If A and B are partners against C and D, the contest should depend on collaborated effort, but if A has a side match against C—and sometimes a bigger bet—situations may arise when A is more concerned on beating C individually than in the joint issue with B against C and D. I have even played in matches in which the situation has been reduced almost *ad absurdum* and the partners have had side matches against each other. But never again!

The four-ball match, however, if properly played, has its golfing virtues as well as its social advantages. It is a combination of both stroke and match play, and ultimately gives the player good training against the pencil; but its weakness is that it tends against one of the invaluable assets in golf—self-reliance. A player is or thinks himself "out of the hole" and he falls into careless habits, placing all his reliance concerning the fate of the par-

ticular hole on his partner. Too often a habit is formed of depending on the other fellow, and when the four-ball addict gets into a tournament, he sometimes feels like a lost sheep without a shepherd.

The four-ball match was never designed for dubs. Originally it came into being as an exhibition form of match for professionals, and is certainly ideal for that purpose. But as a match for beginners it is about the worst thing that they could start on if seriously minded to improve their game. There is too much delay, too much distraction for the novice, and he is not likely to improve his game without the best opportunities for concentration and when either he is delayed or in too much of a hurry.

The main rules of golf, of course, obtain in this form of match, and in others of the same ilk, the three-ball and the best ball. When three players play against each other, each using his own ball, it is a three-ball match. When one player plays against the best ball or two or more players, it is called a best-ball match, and when two players play their better ball against the better ball of two other players, the match is called a four-ball match.

In the very important and much-debated question of handicaps, the U. S. G. A. recommends that three-eighths of the difference of the combined handicaps be allowed. Thus if A, with a handicap of 4, and B with a handicap of 14 be matched against C, with a handicap of 8, and D with a handicap of 16, the latter start 2 up.

Note also that the rules of the golf committee recommend that players should not concede putts to their opponents. Many a golfer lends unction to his locker-room soul by imagining that he has come in with an 81 when he has not holed three or four putts and might have had an 86.

Any player may have any ball lifted or played, at the option of the owner, at any time in the match. If a player's ball move any other ball in the match, the moved ball must be replaced as near as possible to the spot where it lay, without penalty. This rule also answers a question frequently asked. A, in putting his ball, hits one of his opponents' balls, and either sinks it or pushes it dead. In either and every case the ball that was hit must be replaced. But if an opponent does not lift his ball, and you should be fortunate enough to carom off

his ball, that is his mishap and your good fortune.

Through the green a player shall incur no penalty for playing when his opponent should have played, but on the putting green the stroke may be recalled.

If a player's ball strike or be stopped or moved by an opponent or his caddie, the opponent's side shall lose the hole. This rule, however, does not apply to four-ball stroke competition (medal play), in which such accident is merely a "rub of the green."

If a player's ball (the player being one of a side) strike or be stopped by himself or his partner or by either of their caddies or clubs, only that player shall be disqualified for that hole.

If a player play a stroke with his partner's ball, and the mistake be discovered and intimated to the other side before an opponent has played another stroke, the player shall be disqualified for that hole and his partner shall drop a ball as near to the spot from which the ball was played without penalty. If the mistake be not discovered till after the opponent has played a stroke, the player's side loses the hole.

In all other cases in which a player, by the rules of golf, would incur the loss of the hole, he shall be disqualified for that hole, but the disqualification does not apply to his partner.

In conclusion, let us revert once more to the fundamental principle of golf, "play the ball as it lies," and you will automatically avoid nine out of ten of the ordinary transgressions of the rules and the spirit of the game.

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